

VZCZCXRO2060
PP RUEHBI RUEHCI
DE RUEHNE #3997/01 1591205
ZNY CCCCC ZZB
P 081205Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4987
INFO RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2394
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 5710
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 5721
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8711
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2983
RUEHK/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6387
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0209
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 8738
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3415
RUEHC/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 4524
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 4470
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 3706
RUEHC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHUVN/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0667
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RUEAORC/US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION WASHINGTON DC
RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC
RHMCSSU/FAA NATIONAL HQ WASHINGTON DC
RUCNFB/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RUEAHLC/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1085
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3376
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHHJJP/PAON IDHS HONOLULU HI
RHMFIS/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFIS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

Thursday, 08 June 2006, 12:05
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 09 NEW DELHI 003997

SIPDIS
SIPDIS
EO 12958 DECL: 06/07/2016
TAGS PTER, PREL, PGOV, TBIO, PINS, KSCA, PINR, EAIR, SENV,
KHIV, IN
SUBJECT: INDIA BEHIND ON BIOTERROR PREPARATIONS BUT TAKING
SOME STEPS
REF: A. NEW DELHI 3658 B. NEW DELHI 3636 C. NEW DELHI 3611 D. STATE 82566
Classified By: A/PolCouns Atul Keshap for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)
11. (C) Summary: The GOI regards a bioterrorism attack as an event of such low probability that the potential impact does not register high on
12. (C) Advances in the biotech sector and shifting terrorist tactics that focus on disrupting India's social cohesion and economic prosperity
13. (C) Fortunately, terrorist groups operating in India are not focused on bioterror, according to Delhi-based terrorism analysts, although XX
Just Waking Up to the Threat

14. (C) In recent meetings with GOI representatives and Indian scientists, two themes emerged regarding the bioterror
NEW DELHI 00003997 002 OF 009
threat: India's public health and agriculture surveillance systems are sorely lacking, and the GOI is currently ill-equipped to prepare for or
Biological Attack Potentially Devastating

15. (C) The impact of a biological attack or the accidental release of a disease-causing agent in India could be devastating, given the high pc
But GOI Says India Not Ready For Bioterrorism

16. (C) In early May meetings, GOI officials indicated to XXXXXXXXXX and Poloff that Delhi is neither ready for nor focusing on bioterrorism
17. (C) XXXXXXXXXX was unconvincing in his assertion that the GOI has biodefense well in hand. As with criminal matters, XXXXXXXXXX indicat
At Best, A Third-Tier Priority

18. (C) XXXXXXXXXX was candid, however, that biodefense was his third priority after chemical and nuclear/radiological incidents. He also mer
NEW DELHI 00003997 004 OF 009
NDMA already has planned.
19. (C) Contradicting his earlier assertion, XXXXXXXXXX gave a frank assessment of India's ability to respond to a major biological attack or
Opportunity: Terrorism/Natural Outbreak Overlap

10. (C) XXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXX both agreed that India would derive a dual benefit from improved disease surveillance and biodefense pre
Food Defense Resonates

11. (C) Noting the GOI interest especially in food supply protection, XXXXXXXXXX informed XXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXX of the September 25-
12. (SBU) XXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXX found a receptive audience with XXXXXXXXXX, who voiced concerns over vulnerabilities to agriculture
NEW DELHI 00003997 005 OF 009
when the AI outbreak first occurred, the GOI was initially concerned that the public health sector would face a secondary health crisis -- maln
Stovepiping Hinders Inter-Agency Cooperation

13. (C) Discussions with GOI officials indicate bureaucratic inertia among the various ministries to interact with each other on these issues,
Access to Biomaterials "Not Very Difficult"

14. (C) XXXXXXXXXX told Poloff the difficulty of manufacturing biological weapons is offset in India by the relative ease of procuring biolc
NEW DELHI 00003997 006 OF 009
lethal bio-agents is not very difficult here." (COMMENT: Biological agents do not require sophisticated weaponization for dispersal. Food and w
15. (C) XXXXXXXXXX echoed XXXXXXXXXX's assessment that academic facilities maintain very loose security procedures; basic entry barriers e
16. (SBU) A March 21 "Indian Express" article quoted XXXXXXXXXX as having requested (and obtained) police protection from angry poultry farm
17. (SBU) Scioff has also seen photographs taken by a senior Indian army officer, XXXXXXXXXX, from his tour of what he called "frontline fie
A Source of Biological Agents for External Attacks

18. (C) Terrorists planning attacks anywhere in the world could use India's advanced biotechnology industry and large bio-medical research com
NEW DELHI 00003997 007 OF 009
Over-the-Horizon Threats an Enduring Indian Blind Spot

19. (C) The GOI's level of preparedness to combat bioterror attacks may be attributed in part to what the dean of India's strategic establishm
20. (C) XXXXXXXXXX's comments provide a case in point. To place his priority list in context, the December 1984 Bhopal accident still looms l
Luckily, Not On (Most) Terrorists' Radar Yet, Either

21. (C) Bioterrorism would at most appeal to the larger jihadi terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) --
NEW DELHI 00003997 008 OF 009
biological scientists -- well in the thousands -- than any other developing country. Recruitment of Indian scientists by anti-US extremists, ei
GOI Starting to Take Action?

22. (SBU) According to a short April 28 article on "newindpress.com," Home Secretary VK Duggal in April asked Health Secretary Prasanna Hota t
Comment: Wake Up and Smell the Biohazard

23. (C) Strategies to improve public health human and animal sectors are vital for the GOI, as are enforced regulations to safeguard biologica
24. (C) As a US-India CTJWG agenda item, a bioterrorism exercise is one of the most politically sensitive issues for the GOI. Many other count
SIPDIS it comes to fruition, will be a significant demonstration of trust and confidence in this element of the evolving CT partnership with th
25. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:
NEW DELHI 00003997 009 OF 009
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>) MULFORD